10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

194 meanings if spoken in different tones. For example, the
197 syllable *Meh* may mean 'eye', 'sand', 'tail', 'mole' (on the body), or 'tooth', according to the tone in which it is uttered.

538 Originally the Karens had a mass of unwritten bard
173 literature, poems and stories handed down orally and recited around the fireplaces, from generation to generation. Some of these were epic poems which related the history of their race, and others folk stories which they told for amusement and which served to keep alive the traditions of their tribes. Many of these stories were much like the Negro folk tales told in America under the title of "Uncle Remus Stories", or like Grimms' Fairy Tales in Europe. In these Karen folk stories the rabbit figures as the wily one as it does in the Negro tales, and as the fox appears in the European stories.

538 Their epic poems have remarkable accounts of the
773 creation of the world by *Ywa*, who closely resembles the
● 524 God of the Hebrew Scriptures. They tell of the origin
177 of the human race and the expulsion from a garden, which is similar to the story of Paradise Lost. The poems are in five stress lines and are in couplet form like Hebrew poetry. In their earlier days there use to be rhyming contests or "capping rhymes" as an important part of gatherings such as wedding and funeral feasts. At present they only survive among the most primitive villages away from outside influences.

197 There are many dialects of the Karen language—
212 probably about twenty of them. They fall into six groups: the Sgaw, Pwo, Bwè, Padaung, Karenni and Zayein. The Sgaw and Pwo are the two largest groups. These are the two which have been used in education and in

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

857 and in various ways manage to get a good deal of fun out of the few years elapsing before they have to assume their share of the labor in the field and the village.

Girls and young maidens are early trained to assist their mothers, especially in carrying up the water needed for domestic

[854 291]

CHILD RIDING ON ITS MOTHER'S HIP
The youngster does not like to face the camera as well as his mother. He is riding on her hip, which is the common method of carrying children all through the Orient. A silver earring can be seen in the mother's right ear.

524 857 uses. Their imitative play is, therefore, largely devoted to doing some of the things they see their mothers do. Besides this play at house-keeping they have other pastimes. Thus, when they hear the

19: Marshall M-6 (ca. 1910) 1923 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

repeated calls, "tauk-te, tauk-te, tauk-te," of the ubiquitous gecko" 837
or spotted lizard, which lives in hollow trees and sometimes in the 524
houses, they count off "richman, poorman, beggarman, thief," etc., in the playful attempt to discover to which of these groups their future husbands will belong, just as maidens in English-speaking countries count the petals of a daisy for the same purpose. They participate in running games, such as "tag," repeating rhymes in counting out the players and choosing the one who is to be "it." When the players are about to be counted out, they all squat on the ground near the one who is to say over the ditty, with their right fists extended in a circle. She strikes each fist as she utters a syllable, and the one whose hand is struck at the final word becomes the new leader or victim in the game.

There are many of these ditties in use by the children, some of 857
which are composed of words which originally may have had mean- 524
ings that are now lost, while some may be simply a string of reso- 538
nant syllables like our own "eeny, meeny, miny, mo." One of these rhymes, which was written down for me in the Pegu Hills, runs as follows:

"T' ku, hki ku, paw ta lu, saw maw ku ku li, lu t' re, maw ku ta [539]
aw yu."

Others, however, take the form of a narrative, for example, the following which speaks of a Burmese Buddhist monk ("pongyi"), an object of terror to the Karen children. Hence, they say:

"Hop kyi klo hko neu weh lo
Leh aw hsa leu ta lu hko.
Pla wa law teh, hseh ba a hko."

Translated, this reads:

"The 'pongyi' with close shaven head, miserably hungry,
Went to eat his food on the ridge.
The unpoisoned arrow falls and pierces his head."

The children have other little songs which they use in play as, for instance, when in the villages on the plains they run on the logs laid from house to house to serve as walks during the heavy rains. One of their verses is:

"Paw paw to me law ten to di do." [539]

Another version of this is:

"Paw paw pgha me law teh pgha di do."

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

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The translation of the former is:

"Walk, walk the bridge. If it falls the bigger it is," meaning the bigger the bridge, the greater the fall. The rendering of the latter is:

"Walk, walk, the bigger the man, the greater the fall."

When playing with the chickens, children sometimes catch one of them and pretend to rock it to sleep, droning the while:

"Hsaw hpo, mi, mi.
N' mo n' pa leh hsu Yo.
Heh ke so ne na p' theh tha wa ko lo.
Aw gha lo gha lo.
Me aw, hsaw hpo."

The translation of this runs,

"Sleep, sleep, little chick,
Your mother and father have gone to Shanland.
They will come back, bringing you a supply of white betel-nuts.
You can eat them one by one.
Sleep, little chick."

[137]
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Both boys and girls play with the seeds of the giant creeper ("maw keh"). These seeds, which are often two inches in diameter, look much like flattened horse-chestnuts or buckeyes. They come from the enormous pods, a yard or more in length, of the vine, *Estada pusoetha*, which grows a hundred yards or over along the tops of the forest trees.[6] The games in which these seeds are used are played in the dry season. An even number of players is required, divided into two equal groups or "sides." Each side must have the same number of seeds, which are made to stand on their edges by being set in grooves in the hard earth. The rows thus formed are from eight to ten feet apart, according to the age of the children playing. One player begins by spinning a "shooter" at the opposite row, aiming to knock down one or more of the nuts in it. Whether he succeeds or not, his opponent takes his turn, and the players thus shoot alternately back and forth, until one row or the other is entirely knocked over. The winning side is, of course, the one that first demolishes the other's row.

In another game played with these seeds the two sides are again equal in the number of players. However, only those on one side

[6] Burmese children also play with these seeds.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

set up their seeds, while each of those on the other has one shooter, which he spins in turn at the row. If he hits one or more of the nuts, he wins them. When he knocks down all the seeds of his immediate opponent, he changes places with him. If he does not succeed in knocking all of them over, using as shooters all of the seeds he may have won, he changes places and sets up the seeds that he had at the beginning of the game. Sometimes these games are played by the children while squatting on the ground, but often the boy who is shooting will snap his seeds while sitting astride the back of another boy, after the manner of playing "ride the pony," which is sometimes indulged in by European boys.

Karen youths are accustomed to try their strength in boxing, though it is more properly wrestling. Especially in the Moulmein district is this developed as an art and the Karens there are reputed to be the best wrestlers in the country, so much so that even the Burmans concede their superiority. The contest is a sort of catch-as-catch-can affair, in which the object is not to throw the opponent but to scratch him so as to draw blood. The first drop of blood showing on a contestant means that he has lost the match. There seems to be few rules, for hands and feet are used indiscriminately. This art appears to have been practiced for a long time, for John Crawfurd in his *Journal*, in 1827, says that "a Karyen peasant was granted a village in perpetuity by the King [of Burma] on account of his peculiar skill in boxing. He was to teach the youth of this village his noble art." [1] This peasant seems to have come from Bassein.

[1] John Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor General of India to the Court of Ava*, Vol. II, 164.

19: Marshall M-S (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

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Many are the poems that are chanted during the nights of the funeral-feasts. The Karen divide them into various groups, such as the great poems ("hta do"), which are their nearest approach to our classical epics; the small poems ("hta hpo"), which are less dignified than the former; the poems of hades ("hta plü"), in which the words and sentiments are often in keeping with the character of the deceased, praising the respected and condemning the dishonored; poems showing Death the way back to his abode ("hta thwe plü"); poems for the king of hades, in which his name, "Hkü Hte," is mentioned in every line, while in one ("hta yeh law plü") of this group the Karen name for hades is as often repeated; extempore verses ("hta na do") sung in rhyming contests on the last night of the funeral-feasts between the most skillful improvisers of the companies from the different villages represented, and, finally, the love poems, in which the story of the romance between the lover and the maiden is chanted by the leaders of the groups of the young people.

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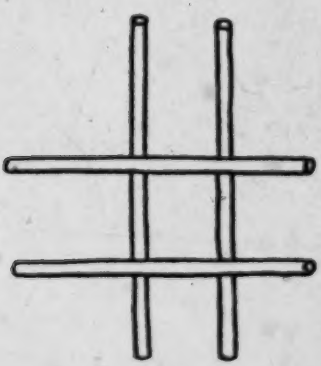
The funeral observances held during the daytime are as boisterous as those held at night. Several of the former consist of jumping the pestles ("ta se kle"). The pestles are the stout sticks with which the hulls are pounded from the rice in wooden mortars, but bamboos are frequently substituted for these in the jumping games about to be described. Four of the pestles or bamboos are placed on the ground in the manner indicated by the accompanying illustration, and four young men take their stations on the sides of the figure thus formed, grasping the ends of the sticks. Three times in succession they knock the pestles on the ground and the fourth time they knock them together. While this is going on a fifth young man jumps in between the projecting ends of the parallel sticks, first on one side, then on another, and the fourth time into the center of the square and out again, if possible, before they are clashed together. The game requires quickness of action and produces great merriment, especially when the jumper's feet are caught. Should they be caught, his failure to



19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1923 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

764
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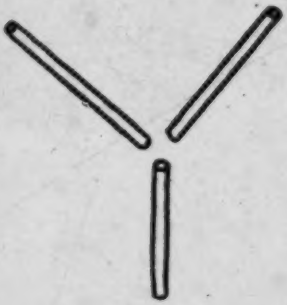
[787]

clear the sticks is regarded as a bad omen, showing that the spirit of the dead man has encountered some obstacle on its journey to its next abode. It is, therefore, incumbent on the jumper to try the center leap over again until he gets through safely.[1]

The next game in order is that of "pounding the pestles" ("ta to kli"). In this game three young men, each provided with a pestle or bamboo stick, take their places at equal intervals about a central spot on the ground, which forms the target at which they strike in turn. A fourth youth must jump first from one side and then another to the center and out again before each stroke falls, and the fourth time also when the wielders of the sticks strike together. In this game the jumper runs considerable risk of getting hit on the feet, unless he is very spry in his movements.



A third game with the pestles is called "stretching the neck" ("ta leh kah"). The four pestles required in this game are held in "criss-cross" fashion as in the first jumping game, but as high as one's shoulders. A young man stands beneath them, and another stands at one corner waving a naked sword above them. The four holding the ends of the pestles strike them together at brief intervals, while the youth beneath them must thrust his head up between the ends of the sticks and withdraw it again before they close about his neck, or the swinging sword touches him. Having done this on three sides in succession, the fourth time he must attempt it through the square in the middle. If he is successful in making the circuit three times without getting "his neck stretched," the assembled company are entitled to feel satisfied that it is well with the soul of the departed.

"Climbing the fruit tree" ("htaw the tha") is a very different kind of game from those described above, involving no physical risk inasmuch as it is a performance in pretending. A conventionalized picture of a tree with a knot part-way up the trunk, two

[1] Dr. Nieuwenhuis tells of a rice-pounder dance in Borneo performed by the women, who skip into the center and out again between the simultaneous strokes of the rice pestles. This dance is not unlike the funeral game described above. He also shows a picture of wrestling in Borneo, a sport evidently conducted like wrestling among the Karen. See plate 13, p. 137 of Dr. Nieuwenhuis's *Quer durch Borneo* (Leyden, 1907).

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19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

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524 pairs of side branches and a central branch, each terminating in two twigs bearing a fruit and leaves, is drawn on the inside of a winnowing-tray. (See page 203.) Betel-nuts or small coins are laid on the sketch to represent the fruit. The man designated to "climb the tree" must receive his instructions from a woman sitting opposite. He begins by asking her: "In climbing the tree, how shall I go up?" To which she replies: "Go up to the big knot." Question and answer follow until he has passed his hand from point to point to the tip of a twig, secured the fruit there, and brought it to earth. This is repeated over and over again, in a way that would prove insufferably tedious to a Westerner, until the last fruit has been gathered. The assembled Karens seem never to tire of this game and regard it as a kind of offering to the departed friend.

A ceremony ("ta w maw") participated in by both the young men and maidens is that of blowing bamboo tubes, rattling bangles, and parading or prancing, rather than dancing, around the corpse. In Shwegyin this ceremony is performed at night. In other places it used to be performed in the daytime at the place of burial, but has largely disappeared in recent times. The young men cut for themselves pieces of small bamboo with the joint in the middle, leaving the ends open, and, provided with these, take their places around the corpse alternating with the maidens, who wear bangles of little round bells or rattling seeds on their wrists. The participants, now facing towards the body and now away from it, parade around it, keeping step to the mingled but pulsating tones of the whistles or open tubes blown by the men and the rattle of the bangles on the swinging arms of the girls. At the end of this noisy parade the men tear their bamboos open with their teeth and throw them down with a loud shout, in which the girls join while shaking their arms vigorously. The spirit of the dead, when it hears this shout, knows that its welfare has not been forgotten by the friends remaining behind and believes that it will be able to avoid all demons along its path. The friends expect this ceremony to speed the departed on his journey.

If the deceased is a very old person who has left all of his children and grandchildren married and with homes of their own, a special observance is celebrated in his behalf. This is called the "taw kwe tah" or the "taw klaw taw." I am not able to interpret these terms. Nowadays the ceremony is very rarely observed, and in the earlier times it seems to have been observed on the plains, but

19: Marshall M-S (ca. 1910) 1922 APT Burma
Karen APT

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not at all in the Pegu Yomas. I have been told that on one occasion when this ceremony was to be performed at Letpadan, those concerned had to get permission from the township officer there and

A Replica of a Tree Used in the Funeral Games

that they spoke of it as "collecting taxes for the soul." A company of young men disguise themselves, several of them in women's costumes and carrying fish-nets, one as a blind man, and another as a lame one. They circulate among the neighboring villages with much shouting and laughter, calling on the inhabitants to contribute sun-

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

764 dry supplies. The members of the party who are impersonating
524 women, go under the houses and pretend to catch fish in their nets. By such methods they manage to gather all they can carry of fruit, vegetables, and other kinds of food, which they consume on their return to the place where the funeral is being held. This ceremony is performed more frequently when the bones of the deceased are exhumed than at the time of his death.

764 After the ordinary daylight observances and the chanting of
761 the poems in the evenings have been completed, the body is removed through an opening made for the purpose in the side of the
[342] house and is carried to the place where it is to be burned or buried. In the olden days it was usual to burn the body, but latterly burial is the common practice. The children used to be confined or tied
[859] up at home during the removal of the corpse. This was to prevent their being scared by the gruesome sight, thus causing their shades or "k'las" to withdraw from their bodies and make them sick, or to keep their "k'las" from being enticed to follow that of the dead person with the same result.

764 In Siam three beds of leaves and twigs are made along the
775 path to the place of burning, the bearers stopping at these piles as though to put down their burden and rest, but allowing it barely to touch the bed when they raise it again and go on.

In those cases in which burning is resorted to, the body is placed upon a pile of fagots three or four feet high and more wood is piled on top. Dry bamboo torches are applied at two or more places and, after the fire is blazing, the body is pierced with long sharpened bamboos to allow the juices to exude and so hasten the process of incineration. Before the body has been wholly consumed, charred pieces of the bones and particularly of the skull are raked out, held near the fire, and addressed with the words: "If you are hot, sit by the fire." After this water is poured over them and they are told, if cold, to bathe and drink water. These injunctions to the bones again illustrate the curious conception on the part of the Karen that the conditions prevailing in the next world are just the reverse of those existing in the present one.

If the full funeral rites have been performed, the bones are ready to be deposited in the family burial-ground. If, however, the cremation has taken place before the performance of the full ceremonies, the bones are usually placed in a basket or wrapped in a cloth and taken home to be used again when the full rites are celebrated. This carrying home of the relics and celebrating a funeral

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Karen AP7
Karennni
Chin AP5

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348. KAREN HOOP-GAME.

The Karennì, or "Red Karéns," have a language of Karén structure, but the people recall the truculent Kachín much more than the mild Karén. They inhabit a plateau about half the size of Wales, lying between the northern limit of the White Karéns and the southern limit of Shans and Kachíns. The *Karennì* are darker-skinned than the Karéns. They use red and black colours in their clothing; the men wear short pants, sleeveless Shan jackets, and a red *gaung-baung*. The women wear a black cloth, somewhat after the manner of the Siamese women; they do most of the labour, even the tilling of the rice-fields, which are on the Shan model; but *taungya* is practised also. They brew a liquor from millet-corn, which the men always carry in their gourd. The villages are permanent, situated on points of vantage, and are stockaded. Feuds between villages are chronic and form the chief concern of the male population. Such of the Karennì as settle in the lowlands adopt the Shan civilisation and dress.

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The Chins are believed by some to represent the stock from which the Burman tribes originated, and to have descended into the valley of the Irawadi from the plateau of Tibet, with the inhabitants of which the Burmans and Chins possess linguistic affinities not shared by other races of the Peninsula. The Chins are the hill-people of the mountains west of the Irawadi and its great tributary the Chindwin. The tribes are many and diverse. Towards the south and on the borders of the plains they are Burmanised in a great measure, and have dropped their primitive characteristics, notably their language. They call themselves Ashō. The black tattooing of the women's faces, which is the most distinctive of

K [286]

349. KAREN WOMAN WEAVING.